THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) The annual rate of inflation as on March 25, 2000 at 3.74% (provisional) was the highest in the last 42 weeks. During the whole year, inflation rate ranged from a high of 4.63% at the beginning of the year to a low of 1.95% in the third week of July 1999.

(b) It is too early to gauge the impact of the Railway and General Budget on the rate of inflation. The post budget increase in wholesale price index has so far been very modest.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

CBI Enquiry into the Caribjet Wet-Lease Deal

3213. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has directed the C.V.C. to order a C.B.I. investigation into alleged irregularities committed by Air India Officials in the Caribjet Wet-lease deal signed in 1995;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof including the names of the suspected officials of A.I./Ministry who are reported to have committed irregularities in the said deal; and

(c) by when the C.B.I. is expected to complete the investigation?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) and (b) At the request of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the CBI has registered a Preliminary Enquiry in this regard against the officials of Air India associated with the Wet-Lease deal including the then Managing Directors of Air India and the Managing Director of M/s Caribjet. The Main allegations being enquired into are:—

— Terms offered to M/s Caribjet by Air India were more favourable than those offered in 1994.
— Non-inclusion of termination clause.
— Whether the termination was warranted.

— Circumstances leading to termination.
— Whether adequate efforts were made to protect the commercial interests of Air India, while terminating the agreement.
— Whether adequate efforts were made to protect commercial interests of Air India in the arbitration proceedings.
— Any other related issue that may crop up during investigations.

(c) It may not be possible to lay down a specific time frame for completion of investigations at this stage.

Stationing of Liaison Officer at Tribhuwan Airport (Kathmandu)

3214. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the news-item captioned India for IA security officer at Kathmandu as reported in the Hindustan Times dated 31st January, 2000;

(b) whether it is a fact that in view of hijacking of IC-814 Government have reiterated its requests to Nepal Government to grant permission for stationing a liaison officer at Tribhuvan Airport;

(c) if so, what is the reaction of Nepal Government thereto; and

(d) whether the Nepal Government have come out with any other proposal for safety of passengers of Indian Aircraft?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) In January 2000, a team of civil aviation experts visited Nepal to identify the requirement of security measures for Indian Airlines. Based on the team's report, Government of India have held discussions with His Majesty's Government of Nepal regarding additional security measures consistent with international civil aviation practices and procedures. Considerable progress has been made but some procedures need to be further refined and finalised.

Civil Aviation Academy

3215. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security proposes to set up a Civil Aviation Academy;